

# FARMERS' VINDICATOR

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## THE ANNUAL ADDRESS TO THE STATE GRANGE OF MISSISSIPPI, BY L. O. BRIDEWELL.

It would certainly, Worthy Master and Worthy Patrons, be gratifying to the ambition of any one to stand before the representatives of 30,000 farmers, as the selected speaker, on an occasion like this; but, when it is remembered, that these constitute only a small fraction of the 800,000 farmers of this vast nation, organized on the same basis and striving to accomplish the same ends, as ourselves, to stand here to discuss the great objects of this organization, becomes a responsible reality to one, who, although a student the greater part of his life, has not been much in the public eye.

The theme, sir, is boundless—for in it and about it are all themes.

### AGRICULTURE,

in fact, is the germ from which has grown up every good to man. Impressed upon humanity when it fell from that position a little lower than the angels, as the universal cause for disobedience, it is in the divine economy, the nursery of true nobility, God fearing and God loving men and women—iconoclasts of the false idols of religion, in morals and in politics, always pointing out the sure and certain road to the final healing of the nations. From it came manufactures, from both came commerce, and from the three combined, comes the diffusion of true religion, and the definite and legitimate civilization of all mankind.

### THESE THREE ARE EQUALS.

They are the trinities of the earth. They should work, advance, and prosper, by that grand element of self-reliance, which is the essential to success in all industries. They should be synergistic in the highest sense of that term through all of these ramifications. Antagonisms do not exist here naturally—this is always the result of unjust or unwise legislation. Normal antagonisms only exist between the principles of evil and of good. These grand elements of the industry of men, are all good, and the

### JEALOUSY AND WAR

that has grown up between capital and labor, is the work of corrupt men, who have produced the enmity by the perversion of natural law, and by the abuse of the delegated powers of government in special legislation. Now, while there are only great facts, standing out as plain to the eye and mind of the thinker, as the law of promise in the heavens, how little do they seem to impress the rulers and law makers of this nation; aye, even the agriculturists and laboring men themselves? We are but in the broad road of the nations.

### TYRANNY AND DESPOTISM,

the will to oppress the many and elevate the few, is the unfortunate legacy to man by the spirit of evil, when he tempted and seduced the mother of mankind. The same end to which we are certainly tending in this government this day, is only a repetition of the history of all nations during all time. In the middle ages in Europe, the agriculturists were the very poor and the very oppressed, laboring for the very rich and protected, and while it remained so, the people and the nations were held under a merciless despotism, crushing out their life and light; and the heavy hand was only

raised, after a thousand convulsions and bloody antagonisms, and after the lapse of centuries. England for nearly three hundred years in her perversion of the natural law of supply and demand, attempted to build up a vast system of manufactories at the expense of other interests, thereby sinking the mass of the people in abject ignorance and the deepest degradation and poverty; lasting until starvation stalked through the land a familiar in the household of every laboring man; lasting, until her corrupt and rotten boroughs, the controllers of Parliament, bought for a price, became so foul, that in sheer desperation the hand worker and the mind worker, made so vigorous a demand for the repeal of protection laws, and the abolition of the corrupt political boroughs, that concentrated wealth yielded to the power of the people; and the result has been that English agriculture flourishes, the poor laborer fears no starvation, education is disseminated, and the men who once lay voiceless under the burdens of wealth protected by special legislation, now influence the policy of the government of England.

### LOOK TO THE EAST,

the land of the lotus and the palm, the land selected by Omnicience for the planting of Paradise, the land, we are told, which once flowed with milk and honey, where the vine emurpled the hills, and the waving grain gilded the valleys; what is it now? For thousands of years despotism has destroyed agriculture, and the millions of the poor, who starve even in the midst of the grain they raise, work and toil on and die, to pamper the thousands who rule and squander what the poor produce. The East, the birth place of man, of civilization, of letters, of poetry, of religion! and to-day, where can you find a despotism more limitless, a bigotry more blighting, a humanity more debased, and a civilization more barbaric?

No civilization, no liberty can exist so long as the wealth of a nation is controlled by the very few, and agriculture is in the hands of only the very poor and needy—so long as labor is debased and capital concentrated—so long as capital can corner the grain of the West and the gold of the East—so long as imbecility and corruption drives from the seats of power and place, study, honesty, and moral character, and so long as one industry is protected at the expense of others, and the higher moral sentiments of the people are shocked at the corruptions which are the emanations of such policy—eventuating, as it has with us, in Sanborn contracts and Credit Mobiliers; Pacific Railroad Stocks and financial panics.

These remarks will not infringe that rule of the Order which disavows political affinities, and banishes their discussion from the Grange Hall.

### THIS CRUSADE OF PATRONS,

however, is in defense and for the preservation of American agriculture, and if any policy of the present Government is in its way, it must fall. Place for the monarch of the land! Open the doors of your temples, for we would examine your Gods, and if you have erected false idols, the iconoclasts of the country are ready and will demolish them. We are the warranters of the national prosperity, and false political theories must give way before this advance, as well as false theories in detail agriculture. Otherwise the organization is useless, and it will become only the puppet of another power.

The American Government is, to-day, struggling through another of those periodical

### FINANCIAL TROUBLES

or convulsions, which, for the lasting wealth of the nation, are becoming alarmingly frequent. Every industry is disturbed; and while there is an excess of currency over that of twelve months since, when everything wore the semblance of prosperity, yet, throughout the land, from the mansions of the rich and the cottages of the poor, comes the same cry: Values are depressed; trade is paralyzed; markets are overstocked; wages are reduced; and general financial gloom overspreads the land. Whence this universal panic? Are there no remedies for evils like this? The wisest minds of the nation have given the subject painful thought, and each, according to his own idiosyncrasy, has detailed the cause and pointed out the remedy; but the great majority of these national doctors are so immersed in the very plans and purposes of the promoters and originators of such panics, that these remedies only aggravate, rather than lessen the disease. The remedies they offer are deceptive—they only give us another disease equally fatal, to cure the one from which we suffer. The Patrons of Husbandry have been charged as the very cause of the panic. If good results; if wisdom comes to us through this tribulation; if the nation shall be brought to see that the subversion of the natural law of supply and demand, and the abuse of the taxing power by special protective legislation; that the arraying of capital and labor in antagonisms; the depression of agriculture and the concentration of wealth, will always produce such panics, we, the Patrons of Husbandry of the United States, will take upon ourselves the burden of all these woes, and glory in having produced so grand a result.

As a general proposition it can be safely stated, that we have

### OVER MANUFACTURED

ourselves as a nation, on a basis of fictitious capital; and it cannot be denied that we have done so because manufacturers are a class who have the certain and abundant protection of Government, at the expense of agriculture and its immediate industries. And in this way has been destroyed the equilibrium between the great industries by which, when well balanced, the prosperity of the nation is assured. That has been declared superior which is only equal, and hence antagonism—hence the strife between capital and labor—hence the concentration of wealth and power, and the diffusion of poverty, and the general out-cropping of public corruption.

In the second place, this country has most wonderfully

### OUT-RAILROADED

itself, and this at the expense, especially, of the producers of the land. The absurd and unthinking policy of the Legislation of the State of Mississippi for the past four years, on this subject, is only the exaggeration of that policy, by ignorance and imbecility, which has characterized men of brains in the States of the North and West, and even in Congress itself. Money has been drawn from production, and the country flooded with the stock of railroads running in every direction; starting from nowhere and never ending anywhere, and based alone upon the sounding phrases of their charters. Gigantic schemes, enjoying the protection, and using the subsidies granted

by Government, have grown up in a day, exalted the pride, and the power and importance of the few, absorbed millions of the people's money, and ended like the dream of Alraschar: corrupting the rulers and law-makers of the nation, by seducing visions of wealth and power, only to be revealed at last, when the country trembles from center to circumference in righting itself from the financial ruin brought upon it by schemes like this.

And then again, as a corollary of the others, we have throughout the North, and West every village boasting its

### NATIONAL BANK,

and clapping its little hands with simulated prosperity. Thousands of these banks, issuing their millions of untaxed paper promises to pay, based upon Government bonds, untaxable, have deserted their legitimate business, borrowed the money of the honest depositors, gambled in the speculating railroad stocks of the exchange marts, and invited financial panics at the expense of every interest.

And on the subject of these National Banks, especially, and of the general subject under review, listen to the words of Jackson, that Bayard of American statesmen, uttered in his farewell address to the people in 1837; and without expressing a Grange opinion or adopting the views, who can deny that these prophetic words of the great Tennessean are not finding their fulfillment this day?

"The planter, the farmer, the mechanic, all know that their success depends upon their own industry and economy, and that they must not expect to become suddenly rich by the fruits of their toil. Yet these classes of society form the great body of the people of the United States; they are the bone and sinew of the country; men who love liberty, and desire nothing but equal rights and equal laws, and who, moreover, hold the great mass of our national wealth, although it is distributed in moderate amounts among the millions of free-men who possess it. But with overwhelming numbers and wealth on their side, they are in constant danger of losing their fair influence in the Government, and with difficulty maintain their just rights against the incessant efforts daily made to encroach upon them. The mischief springs from the power which the moneyed interests derive from a paper currency, which they are able to control; from the multitude of corporations with exclusive privileges, which they have succeeded in obtaining in the different States, and which are employed altogether for their benefit, and unless you become more watchful in your States and check this spirit of monopoly and thirst for exclusive privileges, you will in the end find that the most important powers of government have been given or bartered away, and that the control over your dearest interests has passed into the hands of these corporations."

Now, what light does the census returns for 1870 throw upon this subject? This: that while the farmers and mechanical toilers constitute more than two thirds of the males engaged in useful or producing employments, and supply the means of subsistence to forty times as many as do the railway and mining interests, yet these latter interests occupy a controlling influence in the affairs of Government and are the yearly recipients of careful consideration in the shape of monstrous subsidies and legal protection, concentrating power and wealth in the

hands of the few at the expense of the general interests and prosperity of the many. And also, while those engaged in every character of manufacture, master and man, are three times less in number than the farmers alone, and while the amount of capital invested by the farmers is six times more than the manufacturers, yet the gross values produced by the manufacturer is estimated as ten times that produced by the farmers. The farmer's labor yielding him only an average of five per cent. at most, while the manufacturer glories in forty-five. The figures of that wonderful table also show that in every \$100 of manufactured goods you buy, you pay not only the cost of the materials used and the wages of the labor employed, but from \$25 to \$50 to the capitalist. How happens it, do you ask? The answer is plain, the manufacturer is the pet of the Government, the pampered child of protective tariffs, and like all other pet children, demands more the more it gets. Agriculture is made to pay for what it does not consume, pay for that which represents no value, that the manufacturer may thrive, and prosper, and concentrate, and corrupt. You are all made to pay the bonus to the home manufacturer in the shape of the protective duty laid by the Government on the imported article of the same grade, with the merchant's profits added—increasing the price of what you buy and reducing the price of what you sell.

### THIS INSATIATE MONSTER

is the growth of accident, or rather of the timid policy of a new government. The fathers of '87 never dreamed of what we see and feel to-day. The Constitution conferred upon Congress the power to levy taxes alone for the purpose of providing revenue for the Government; and examining that fundamental charter in all its bearings, it was evidently anticipated that this revenue would be obtained by direct taxation, apportioned among the States according to the provisions made for such purpose therein. In the first Congress, however, while the general view was favorable to free trade and direct taxation, it was deemed prudent, as the views of the old world set strongly that way then, to experiment with a tariff for revenue for seven years, led thereto more particularly from the fact that it was feared, from the intense feeling of States rights by the early patriots, that the people would not accept, without trouble, a direct taxation on the States for the support of the general Government. The first tariff was limited to seven years, and the duty imposed on foreign wool and cotton goods, in order to encourage our infant industries, was only five per cent. It was a great blunder of our fathers, this tariff experiment; for since that day the tariff has been altered and amended no less than forty times, and the average duty imposed to-day, since these manufacturing industries have become full grown and the masters of the people, is ten times as great as at first. When it was the puling infant at its mother's breast, five per cent. gave it stomach, strength and constitution, but now, when full grown and master of the situation, able alone to compete with the most powerful forces of the world, the ingrate demands, and receives, ten times as much—like the leech, having tasted human blood, it must be gorged to the full.

What have we then? The manufacturers, the railroad magnates, and the silent and the slippery bankers, in